

INTERCULTURAL KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCE

for more information, please contact uclo@css.edu



Framing Language

At the College of St. Scholastica, the pursuit of social justice derives from our Benedictine heritage and the tenets of Catholic social teaching. Our students need knowledge and skills for understanding, communicating, and interfacing with differences of all sorts—locally, domestically, and globally. A liberal education should engage students with their relationships to systems of power, privilege, and oppression, and the relationships those systems have with groups that have been historically marginalized and oppressed—again, locally, domestically, and globally. These groups include—but are not limited to—identities of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, age, marital status, ability or disability, religion, and class. A liberal education must also mean that students understand the fundamental role of culture in human behavior and society, including the universal experiences that exist in all cultures and for all identity groups; students must also practice toward inter- and cross-cultural fluency, negotiating and transcending boundaries.

CSS students should develop the ability to continually adapt and learn about social diversity and other identity groups or cultures; they should develop attitudes of openness and empathy for recognizing their own positionality and understanding the positionalities of others; and they should develop skills for working across difference. These skills and attitudes must include dedication to a lifelong process of practice and improvement, building the skills of “stepping back to understand one’s own assumptions, biases, and values, and shifting one’s gaze from self to others and conditions of injustice in the world.” Because our vision is broader than AAC&U’s Global Learning or Intercultural Knowledge & Competence rubrics alone, we employ our own Intercultural Knowledge and Competence rubric to the “intercultural knowledge and competence” outcome.

Glossary

The definitions that follow were developed to clarify terms and concepts used in this rubric only.

Positionality: Positionality is one’s social location within a shifting network of intersecting relationships such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, abilities, etc. How one is positioned in relation to others shapes how individuals understand, interpret, and make sense of their own and others’ experiences in the world. Our location often influences what we can and cannot see, which affects what we are able to know and how we communicate that knowledge. Understanding positionality means recognizing where an individual or group stands with respect to power and how that subject-position contributes to different, often conflicting standpoints/interpretations of similar phenomena (or the status quo) in a local or global context. Knowledge of ourselves and others is always situated, partial, and connected to power. Understanding positionality must also include understanding the effects and impacts that one’s actions may derive from one’s position, especially when that positionality is one of power.

Culture: A traditional definition of “culture” includes the ideas, norms, values, practices, symbols, concepts, forms of expression, etc., shared by a group of people, consciously or unconsciously. Culture is social, and so cultures have relationships and interactions with other social dynamics. People in positions of power and people with marginalized experiences can develop different values, norms, ideas, practices, etc --- they can even develop different notions of inequity itself. Cultural forms of expression can include mobilizing resistance to, opposing, or giving voice to inequities and injustices.

The two constructs above, culture and positionality, are not independent. They intersect and interact; the same person may straddle several cultural identities; the same person’s positionality may change in different contexts.

Identity & self-awareness: Awareness that one has multiple, overlapping identities, and of the positionalities of those identity groups.

Perspective-taking and openness: The ability to hear and hold multiple perspectives while withholding judgment; to move beyond one’s own worldview and consider the positions and positionalities of others.

Structural systems of power, privilege, and oppression: Knowledge of explicit and implicit social systems that create and maintain inequitable positionalities among different identity groups.

Knowledge of historically disadvantaged groups: Understanding of the identities and positionalities of global cultures and/or domestic identity groups that have been historically marginalized.

Reducing oppression: Application of knowledge and skills toward equity; equity-mindedness.

Communication across boundaries: Skills for bridging gaps, appropriately crossing boundaries, and negotiating shared understandings; learning how, when, and why to say what to whom.

¹Kumagai, A. K., & Lyson, M. L. (2009). Beyond cultural competence: critical consciousness, social justice, and multicultural education. *Academic Medicine*, 84(6), 782-787.

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Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any work sample or collection of work that does not meet benchmark (cell one) level performance.

	Capstone 4	Milestones		Benchmark 1
		3	2	
Identity & Self-Awareness	Develops a sophisticated, multi-dimensional analysis of own positionality in terms of the surrounding sociopolitical context, and in light of this, demonstrates a deep understanding of their own biases, where they came from, and how one engages in bias-reduced interaction.	Analyzes own positionality, incorporating more than one dimension of identity, in terms of the surrounding sociopolitical context. Able to recognize own biases and evaluate own judgments, actions, and/or perspectives in light of their positionality.	Basically identifies own positionality in terms of the surrounding sociopolitical context, recognizing only one dimension of identity. Recognizes own biases, but has a limited ability to connect them to own positionality.	Identifies biases and socially-constructed worldviews among other identity groups, but has limited recognition of own positionality in terms of the surrounding sociopolitical context. Highlights commonalities while discounting distinctions (such as a lens of “colorblindness”) when describing other identity groups.
Perspective-Taking and Openness	Responsively, sensitively, and creatively addresses complex subjects, empathetically utilizing multiple marginalized perspectives/worldviews, in light of conflicting and intersecting positions. Capable of suspending judgment. Where applicable, interactions are supportive, collaborative, and productive.	Responsive and sensitive to multiple and intersecting marginalized perspectives/worldviews, emotionally and/or intellectually. Capable of suspending judgment. Interprets and values multiple perspectives and/or worldviews, makes connections and analyzes conflicting positions among them, with empathy. Where applicable, interactions are both supportive and collaborative.	Sensitive to, and respectful of, multiple marginalized perspectives/worldviews. Begins to suspend judgment. Identifies, describes, and discusses varying perspectives, products, and practices (such as cultural, disciplinary, and ethical) which appropriately inform expanded interactions.	Receptive to idea of multiple perspectives. Recognition that own experience/worldview is not universal. Interactions are (self) limited by lack of in-depth examination of, and adherence to, own perspectives, products, and practices (such as cultural, disciplinary, and ethical).
Structural Systems of Power, Privilege, and Oppression	Proposes changes to multiple interconnected social systems along the dimensions of power, privilege, and oppression to relieve inequities for identity groups; can explain how these revised structures would, in practice, lead to more equitable conditions for individuals whose identities intersect with the affected groups.	Deconstructs and analyzes multiple interconnected social systems along the dimensions of power, privilege, and oppression. Relates these interconnected social structures to the inequitable treatment of individuals from multiple, intersecting identity groups.	Explains a system of power, privilege, and oppression, and relates this social structure to inequitable treatment of individuals from particular identity groups.	Acknowledges and recognizes a basic system of privilege, power, and oppression and recognizes inequitable treatment of individuals based on their identity.

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	Capstone 4	Milestones		Benchmark 1
		3	2	
Knowledge of Historically Disadvantaged Groups (Domestic or Global)	Demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of multiple important components (such as history, values, politics, economy, beliefs, practices, experiences, worldview, etc.) that have shaped an identity group and informed its movements for social justice.	Demonstrates a deep understanding of multiple important components (such as history, values, politics, economy, beliefs, practices, experiences, worldview, etc.) that have shaped an identity group and informed its movements for social justice.	Demonstrates an adequate understanding of multiple important components (such as history, values, politics, economy, beliefs, practices, experiences, worldview, etc.) that have shaped an identity group.	Demonstrates a surface understanding of at least two important components (such as history, values, politics, economy, beliefs, practices, experiences, worldview, etc.) that have shaped an identity group.
Reducing Oppression	Critically reflects upon and analyzes personal role in alleviating oppression through action, participation, or deeper academic study. Integrates an understanding of the ethical dimensions of individual actions.	Analyzes, explains, and situates personal role in alleviating oppression through action, participation, or deeper academic study. Demonstrates an understanding of the ethical dimensions of individual actions.	Explains the individual or collective actions, activities, and/or knowledge that can reduce oppression in a domestic or global context. Explains ethical dimensions of relevant local, national, or international decisions.	Identifies basic actions, activities, and/or knowledge that can reduce oppression in a domestic or global context. Identifies some basic ethical dimensions of relevant local, national, or international decisions.
Communication Across Boundaries	Develops and demonstrates a complex understanding of differences and similarities in both verbal and nonverbal communication among identity groups. Transcends boundaries and is able to skillfully negotiate a shared understanding based on those differences.	Analyzes and participates in differences and similarities in both verbal and nonverbal communication among identity groups. Transcends boundaries to begin to negotiate a shared understanding based on those differences.	Identifies some differences and similarities in both verbal and nonverbal communication among identity groups, and is aware that misunderstandings can occur based on those differences. Begins to transcend own boundaries but is still unable to negotiate a shared understanding.	Has a minimal level of understanding of differences and similarities in both verbal and nonverbal communication among identity groups; is unable to transcend own boundaries and negotiate a shared understanding.